



Department of Justice

United States Attorney Richard Hartunian
Northern District of New York

January 3, 2012

[Syracuse, New York]

<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/nyn>

GUILTY PLEA IN TAVORN HUNTER HOMICIDE

RICHARD HARTUNIAN, United States Attorney, Northern District of New York, announces that **DEREK WILLIAMS**, age 22, of Syracuse, New York, pled guilty today in U.S. District Court in Syracuse to multiple crimes relating to his involvement in the murder of Tavorn Hunter on October 24, 2010. **WILLIAMS** pled guilty to a three-count Information charging him with: Count One - conspiracy to engage in a Hobbs Act robbery of marijuana, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1951; Count Two - conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute marijuana, in violation of 21 U.S.C. § 846; and Count Three - aiding and abetting the use and carry of a weapon during and in relation to a drug trafficking crime, with such weapon being discharged, resulting in the death of a person, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 924(c) and (j) and 2.

As part of his plea, **WILLIAMS** admitted that he used his cell phone to order a quantity of marijuana from Hunter, and enlisted then 17 year old Shakeem Moore into a scheme to rob the marijuana from Hunter at gunpoint. Moore met Hunter in front of a store at East Colvin and South State Streets in Syracuse, at which time the two engaged in a struggle as Moore attempted to carry-out the robbery. The struggle ended when Moore momentarily freed himself from Hunter's grasp and fired one shot from his .40 caliber handgun into Hunter's chest, killing him. The entire incident was captured on surveillance videotape. Moore has been charged in Onondaga County Court with Second Degree Murder and faces a sentence of 25 years to life in prison if convicted.

WILLIAMS faces up to life imprisonment without the possibility of release, up to five years of supervised release following any period of incarceration and a fine of up to \$250,000, when he is sentenced in May 2012.

This prosecution resulted from an investigation undertaken by the Syracuse Police Department, in coordination with the Syracuse Gang Violence Task Force, which is comprised of agents and detectives from the following agencies: United States Department of Justice, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (Syracuse Office), the Syracuse Police Department, the Onondaga County Sheriff's Department, the New York State Police, and the U.S. Marshal's Service.

Further questions or inquiries may be directed to Assistant United States Attorney John M. Katko, the prosecutor handling the case, at (315) 448-0916.

END OF NEWS RELEASE
